



State of South Carolina
Office of the Lieutenant Governor

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**LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR BAUER ANNOUNCES
MAJOR INITIATIVES FOR 2005 SESSION**

(Columbia) - South Carolina Lieutenant Governor Andre Bauer, head of the state's Office on Aging, has officially outlined his major initiatives for the coming legislative and calendar year.

"I am honored and excited to lead the effort to get these important measures at the top of lawmakers' minds in this coming session," Bauer said. "Whether it's a tax credit for buying long term care insurance or funding for more advocacy and protection, our office is doing all it can to better the lives of seniors in South Carolina."

At the news conference announcing the initiatives, Lt. Governor Bauer outlined why it was so important to take a harder look at senior issues, noting that South Carolina has a rapidly increasing retiree population coupled with its large base of baby-boomers reaching retirement age. He noted that while many born and raised here are from poorer rural areas, those moving in have a net worth of more than \$1 million and a yearly income of \$90,000. All of those people, Bauer noted, will need and expect quality healthcare and other services for years to come, regardless of their financial status.

Among the major initiatives announced were more funding for Long Term Care Ombudsmen, an item now in Governor Sanford's executive budget; a state income tax credit for the purchase of long term care insurance; a loan forgiveness program to encourage more medical students to enter gerontology and a way to solve the issue of declining bingo revenues in South Carolina, which are used to fund a variety of senior-related projects.

"I hope everyone interested in these areas will contact their local senator and representative and tell them how important it is to act on these issues as soon as possible," Bauer added. "By working together, we can make South Carolina the best state in the union for seniors to call home."

The Lieutenant Governor's office assumed direction of the State Bureau of Senior Services in July of 2004, renaming it the Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging. This move gives South Carolina seniors a prominent voice in government and allows for more accountability in the office.

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